Idaho Currents

DOE Recognizes Idaho's Wind Power Development Efforts

Idaho's wind is no secret. Just ask Gerry Galinato, a principal energy specialist with the Energy Division. Recently, he received an award from the Wind Powering America Program for his excellent leadership of a wind power working group.

The award was presented in mid-May to Galinato during the Wind Powering America Annual State Summit in Denver, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

It is one of several awards that have been given to Galinato, who has spearheaded the Idaho Wind Power Working Group and an earlier add-hoc steering committee for the past five years.

The new Outstanding State Wind Working Group award was presented to Galinato "In recognition of developing and engaging a multi-stakeholder effort for effective outreach to Idaho's agriculture, utility, and Native American sectors."

In October 2001 he was recognized by the U.S. Department of Energy for his leadership in promoting wind energy technologies in Idaho.

"It is quite an honor to be recognized nationally for our efforts to help develop our wind power resources in Idaho," says Galinato.

Galinato has been with the Idaho Department of Water Resources for 31 years; eight with water resource development programs and 23 years with energy efficiency and renewable resource programs. He is a registered professional engineer, and holds a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Science degree in agricultural engineering from the University of Idaho.

While working with IDWR's Energy Division, Galinato, along with nine employees, has championed agricultural energy efficiency and the development and use of alternative fuels and renewable energy resources.

Gerry Galinato

Wind Power Working Group

The Idaho Wind Power Working Group was established in 2002. Its members include representatives from federal, state and local governments, utility companies, renewable energy advocates, wind power industry, and environmental organizations.

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New Solar Rebate Program Begins

The Energy Division is offering a new program that allows Idahoans interested in purchasing solar electric systems, either on or off-grid, to get free site assessments by qualified solar dealers or installers. The division hopes the rebate program will encourage the installation of more solar electric systems in Idaho.

This home is a good example of grid-connected photovoltaic panels. PV rooftop applications such as this will contribute toward the Million Solar Roofs Initiative. (DOE/NREL photo)

Those interested in the site assessments should select and contact a dealer from the list of consultants and dealers on the Idaho Energy Division's website, www.idahosolar.org and request a solar system design, site evaluation and price quote.

All site inspections must be done in Idaho. Systems may be for home, commercial or water pumping systems for federal, state, or local governments, utilities, businesses or private individuals. Systems must be new, 200 watts or greater. Upgrades to existing systems and small applications, such as use by recreational vehicles, do not qualify.

Dealers will supply each potential solar system owner with a copy of the Idaho Customer Information Booklet, a sun chart and a completed site evaluation form. The booklet is a non-technical reference handbook that describes the components of a solar electric system, how it works, how to do a load assessment, financing available and other information.

Each dealer or installer must submit a copy of the completed evaluation form to the Energy Division in order to qualify for the rebate: $75 for an on-grid assessment and $175 for an off-grid assessment.

"The dealers get the rebates to offset the costs of site inspections, especially those in remote areas," says John Crockett, renewable energy specialist with the Energy Division. "The potential system owner gets the inspection done at no cost. This step is vital to learning whether or not the location is a viable one for using solar electricity."

Funds for the rebates are limited, and the Energy Division expects that about 50 rebates will be made on a first come, first-served basis. The Division reserves the right to verify the site assessment information with the customer and to limit the number of evaluations each dealer may submit.

Questions?

Call the Idaho Energy Hotline, 1-800-334-SAVE, and ask for K.T. Hanna, or call her directly at 208-287-4898. She is also available via e-mail, k.t.hanna@idwr.idaho.gov

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Eight sub-committees focus on:

- Resource assessment
- Government policy development
- Wind power awareness
- Transmission
- Economic assessment and promotion
- Awareness of policy makers
- Development of large-wind projects
- Development of small-scale and medium-scale wind projects

The group's mission is to promote wind power development in Idaho, with the primary emphasis on the development of commercial-scale wind farms in the state. The group also promotes small-scale wind development, both of which operate in several Idaho locations.

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Training Sessions Introduce Builders to ENERGY STAR® Programs

As residential construction continues throughout Idaho, the Idaho Energy Division's builder training programs are in higher demand.

"More people are seeing the advantages of owning an energy-efficient home constructed by trained and certified builders," says Doug Plourde, energy specialist, Idaho Energy Star program manager. "Several Energy Division programs are designed to provide technical assistance to builders, remodelers and home owners throughout Idaho."

The Energy Division is one of 19 home energy rater and trainer providers in the country certified by the Residential Energy Services Network. (See RESNET sidebar)

"Without these training programs, people would have to travel out of state to obtain certified training at a much greater expense," says Plourde.

Armed with an intense curriculum, Energy Division employees and representatives from private companies conduct five-day training sessions twice a year, in May and December.

Building Energy Auditor Ingo Stroup conducts a blower door test to measure air leakage in a home. Home Performance trainees learn how to perform this test and interpret the results during the training sessions. ***(Photo by Diane Holt)***

Participants learn how to test and audit building systems for performance and safety and become familiar with the Idaho Energy Star Homes and Idaho Home Performance with Energy Star programs.

Other classes cover the interactions between various materials, products, and mechanical systems, the effect that occupants have on buildings, and the environmental impact of different building zones throughout the United States.

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What is RESNET?

The Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) was established in April 1995 by the National Association of State Energy Officials and Energy Rated Homes of America to develop a national market for home energy rating systems and energy-efficient mortgages.

RESNET's mission is to improve the energy efficiency of the nation's housing stock and to qualify more families for home ownership by expanding the national availability of mortgage financing options and home energy ratings.

Keep Your Cool and Save Money Too

You can save 10-50 percent on your utility bills this summer and still stay cool, says the U.S. Department of Energy.

By following a few easy, common sense guidelines, properly maintaining or upgrading your air conditioner, adding insulation and taking other easy energy-saving measures, you can cut your reduce your energy bills.

“Almost 45 percent of a homeowner’s utility bill goes for heating and cooling,” says Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman. “By taking a few simple steps, American families can make their homes more energy efficient and can save a significant amount of money, too.”

Your individual savings will depend on how energy-efficient your home is now, the type of home you have, and the area of the country where you live.

Use Air Conditioning and Fans Wisely

- Open windows and use portable or ceiling fans instead of operating your air conditioner.
- Use a fan with your window air conditioner to spread the cool air through your home.
- Use a programmable thermostat with your air conditioner to adjust the setting warmer at night or when no one is home.
- Don’t place lamps or TVs near your air conditioning thermostat.
- The heat from these appliances will cause the air conditioner to run longer.
- Look for the ENERGY STAR® label. If your air conditioner is old, the new energy efficient models can save you up to 50 percent on your cooling bills.
- Consider installing a whole house fan or evaporative cooler if appropriate for your climate.

Low Cost Tips to Save Energy

- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents.
- Air dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher’s drying cycle.
- Use a microwave oven instead of a conventional range or oven.
- Turn off your computer and monitor when not in use.
- Plug home electronics, such as TVs and VCRs, into power strips and turn power strips off when equipment is not in use.
- Lower the thermostat on your hot water heater – 115 degrees is comfortable for most uses.
- Take showers instead of baths to reduce hot water use.
- Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes.
- Use cold water to wash your clothes.

Landscape for Energy Efficiency

- Plant trees or shrubs to shade air conditioning units, but do not block the airflow. A unit operating in the shade uses less electricity.
- Grown on trellises, vines such as ivy or grapevines can shade windows or the whole side of a house.
- Avoid landscaping with a lot of unshaded rock, cement or asphalt on the south or west sides — it increases the temperature around the house and radiates heat to the house after the sun has set.
- Trees whose leaves fall off in the winter, planted on the south and west sides, will keep your house cool in the summer and let the sun warm your home in the winter.
- Just three trees, properly placed around a house, can save between $100 and $250 annually in cooling and heating costs. Daytime air temperatures can be 3 to 6 degrees cooler in tree-shaded neighborhoods.

Shade Your Windows

- Sunny windows can make your air conditioner work two to three times harder.
- Install white window shades, drapes or blinds to reflect heat away from the house.
- Close curtains on south- and west- facing windows during the day.
- Install awnings on south-facing windows.

See *Keep, on* page 5

Spring Rains Help, But Drought Continues

By Michael Keckler
IDWR Public Information Officer

This year's weather pattern turnaround has been exceptional. Boise recovered from perhaps driest first three months on record, to mid-June precipitation levels that are slightly above average for the year.

As of mid-June, Magic Valley rainfall totals were now 3.4 inches above the 30-year average, Idaho Falls had 1.7 inches of extra water, and moisture levels were near average again in the panhandle region.

Reservoir levels have also made huge gains. Three months ago, experts predicted the upper Snake River system might reach 60 percent of capacity this year. At last report, that system was 83 percent full. The Boise and Payette systems register at 85 percent and 97 percent of capacity.

Perhaps the biggest turnaround can be found in Big Lost and Wood River basins. A year ago, Mackay Reservoir stored just 10,870 acre-feet of water – 25 percent of capacity. As of June 5, the reservoir stood at 101 percent of capacity with 44,290 acre-feet of water - a four-fold increase that prompted Idaho Department of Water Resources Director Karl Dreher to tell the Interim Legislative Committee that the Big Lost River flowed past Arco for the first time since 1997.

"It's just remarkable, no one could have predicted this," Dreher said. Magic Reservoir water storage has increased almost as dramatically. On June 7, 2004, the reservoir was 25 percent of capacity, and stored just 48,605 acre-feet of water. One year later, Magic Reservoir is 75 percent full, storing 144,689 acre-feet.

So what does all this mean for the drought?

"The rain helped out a lot this year, but in terms of the cumulative effects of the drought, we're still in it," says IDWR Hydrologist Liz Robbins. "Because of this drought cycle, we've lost a whole year's worth of precipitation, so we are still way behind."

The drought questions will continue, and only nature can provide a real answer. And as we've seen the past three months, there's no telling when it will come.

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An extended understanding of heat flow, pressures, moisture, and air movement in buildings is an essential part of the training.

Spring training

The most recent training session was conducted in May at the Energy Division's office in Boise. As part of the training and certification, participants are required to pass a national exam in order to provide rating services throughout Idaho and in any other state in the country. Six participants passed the exam, making them eligible to become Home Performance Specialists.

"The exam covers technical aspects of home energy rating services, basic building science, home auditing, plan take-offs, and testing for performance and safety," says Plourde.

Participants who pass the training are certified to participate in the Idaho Energy Star Homes℠ Program for new site built homes and the Idaho Home Performance with Energy Star Retrofit program for existing homes.

For more information, call the Idaho Energy Hotline, **1-800-334-SAVE**. Plourde can be reached at 208-287-4903 or by email at doug.plourde@idwr.idaho.gov. Additional information is available on the Energy Division's website at www.idwr.idaho.gov/energy.

***Keep,* from page 4**

- Because of the angle of the sun, trees, a trellis or a fence will best shade west-facing windows.
- Apply sun-control or other reflective films on south-facing windows.
- If you want to replace your windows, consider the new double-pane windows with special coatings.
- When buying windows or appliances, look for the Energy Star label. Visit www.energystar.gov for more information.

Weatherize

- Insulating, caulking and weather stripping will keep cool air in during the summer.
- Add insulation around air conditioning ducts when they are located in un-air conditioned spaces such as attics, crawl spaces and garages.
- Check to see that your fireplace damper is tightly closed.